

Not sure this is going to do any good but here goes nothing... yet again! I own 7+ green sticker vehicles that I renew every year without placing them into PNO status. Further, I contribute to the GS fund by way of my taxes collected from the fuel tax. Being a self-described large contributor to the fund, I must make my opposition known to the funding of various questionable aspects of the SCMF OHV Program.

I need to make it known that I have first-hand experience with the dealings, agenda and manner of operation of the OHV arm of the SCMF as well as the SBNF. Within the Restoration and Safety Grants, it shows this "private club" is asking for a lot of money for staffing. I find this quite troubling as they have shown themselves to be exclusionary and prohibitive when it comes to how they treat their own volunteers, let alone any who wish to re-join after a short absence. Personally, I know of more than a few that have been told not to bother coming back as well as flat-out expelling members with no explanation as to why. This is seen as disenfranchisement by myself and many others.

They exclaim that their volunteers do "patrols" and are the eyes & ears of the USFS. It is a fact that they are discouraged from addressing the public if the public is doing something wrong and/or acting in a way that can damage natural resources. These patrols are merely "fun runs" and nothing more than a sight-seeing adventure for a vast majority that claim they are out contacting the public. A "friendly wave" while traveling by 4x4, ATV or motorcycle, at any member of the public while out on a "patrol" denotes a virtual in-person verbal education in their eyes and they count this as such when applying for the much coveted "points" with regards to MY OHV funds. SCMF claims they "patrol" 5+ days a week when, by their own records, they log less than 10 "patrols" a month. This does not seem fair nor does it seem right.

A great majority, if not all, of the work that gets done within the OHV program is through the volunteer base. They keep requesting Restoration funds but I do not see an active Restoration Project this year. I thought this was what their Adopt-A-Trail Program was for. Why don't they use the match to cover these expenses within the volunteers or better yet, have they looked into other off-road or other clubs that are experienced and already established for this type of work to come in and partner with them? I am sorry to say that I do not support their Restoration Grant.

Now, as far as the Safety and Education Grant, I do not support this either for a number of reasons. The SCMF is asking for more money again for employees where they should be using volunteers. Such an action would cut the cost not only of salaries but also with reimbursable items (i.e. a car allowance). Their staff currently has, at their disposal, access to USFS vehicles. Why are those not being used instead of paying for mileage? If the volunteers are taking care of these new positions, this would not be an issue either. As a volunteer, they are "volunteering" their time and resources. Why is the SCMF asking for my tax dollars to fund employees of an organization that amounts to nothing more than a "private club"? This question leaves me perplexed and terribly vexed.

In closing, I thank those involved for taking the time to review my questions and comments. Money should be allocated to those who use it properly and wisely. [James Haubner] JimBlossom@yahoo.com